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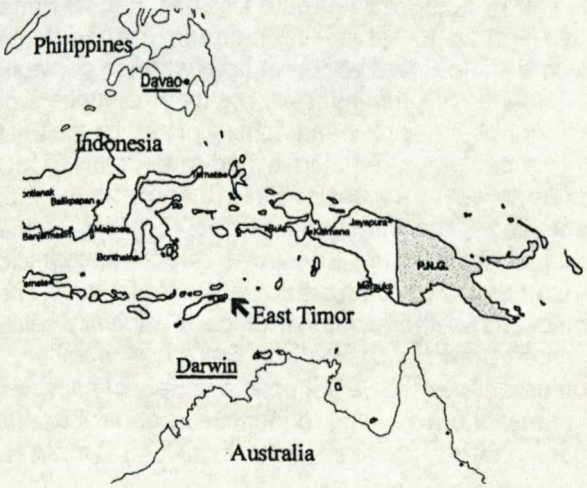
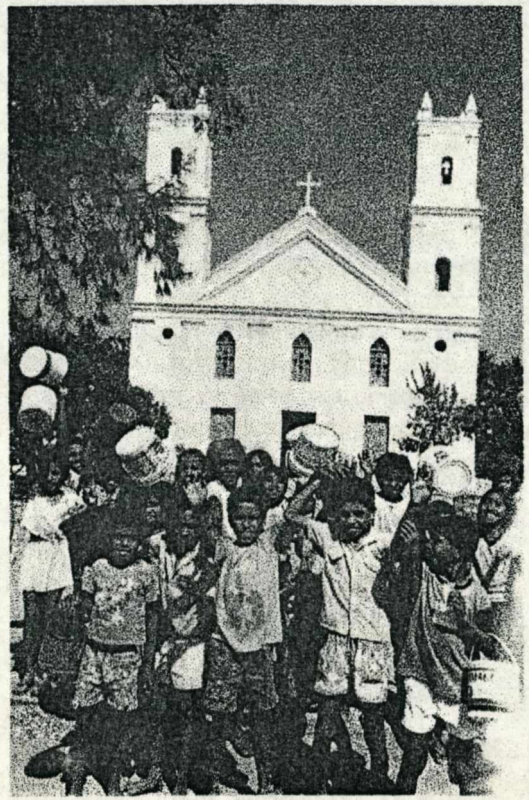


The East Timor problem

The territory of East Timor, a Portuguese colony for over 400 years, is located on the fringe of the Indonesian archipelago, between South east Asia and Australia in the vicinity of the South Pacific. It is at least equal, if not larger, in size and population than some 30 independent member states of the UN. East Timor has been the scene of a major and tragic conflict since 1975. In that year Indonesia invaded this 18,889 square kilometre territory, maintaining to this day its illegal presence in defiance of international condemnation, including United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The armed forces of the large Indonesian Republic maintain a war of genocidal proportions, in a futile attempt to crush the resistance of most sectors of the approximately 700 000 East Timorese. Massive human rights violations have caused the death of over one third of the population. Resistance against Indonesian occupation remains strong as public international support for the cause of freedom and self-determination of the East Timorese people grows. Governments, keen on profitable economic links with the Indonesian ruling elite, have so far preferred to condone the situation, so as to protect their business interests.



(East Timorese children collecting drinking water - Dili)

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East Timor International Support Center

(ETISC)

ETISC II

A legally incorporated independent organisation to provide high level professional support to the international campaign of the East Timorese people for their right of self-determination.

Hon. Chair: Dr José Ramos-Horta
Nobel Peace Prize laureate 1996

Present Context

The illegal occupation of East Timor by Indonesia remains an international issue of concern. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 to the people of East Timor through Bishop Carlos Filipe Belo, and Diplomat José Ramos-Horta, is a strong example of the growing international recognition of the justice of the East Timorese cause, and the continuing erosion of the legitimacy of the Suharto regime. In this context it is urgent to intensify the world wide campaign in support of the East Timorese right of self-determination in order to make full use of newly emerging opportunities.

ETISC

The 'East Timor International Support Centre (ETISC)', has been set up to be a well organised and resourced international campaign support centre, able to professionally assist intensified information dissemination and advocacy campaigns world wide. ETISC, incorporated in the Philippines, and operating in Australia, Asia, Europe and America, will enhance efforts in favour of East Timorese self determination and the democratisation of Indonesia, and assist the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and his team to utilise new opportunities to advance the East Timorese diplomatic struggle.

Goals, objectives & methods

ETISC goals are to foster international public support for the respect and protection of the international principles and norms at present violated by the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. ETISC will encourage and support international campaigns calling for the respect of the right of self determination of the East Timorese people, and for an improvement in the social, political, and human conditions in the territory.

ETISC objectives are to increase international awareness of the current situation in East Timor, to assist in the search of a peaceful solution to the conflict, and to mobilise international pressure on Indonesia, so as to achieve a policy change towards the territory acceptable to the East Timorese people.

To reach its goals and objectives, ETISC will support or engage internationally in advocacy, education and exposure campaigns, production and dissemination (or encouragement and support for the production by others) of written, audio and visual information materials, organisation of conferences on East Timor, fostering of visits and exchanges, initiation or coordination of political action campaigns.

ETISC will maintain close relations with existing specialised East Timor support organisations, and encourage the formation of others. It will also assist East Timor solidarity groups in various countries and promote the establishment of new ones.

As a matter of priority, ETISC will strengthen the education campaigns and other activities in support of the East Timor cause among the Indonesian people, both inside the country and abroad.

ETISC will implement, or provide background support for, any activity compatible with its goals and objectives with a specific national government, group or association of governments, international forum body or organisation, requested from it by the East Timorese people and their organisations.

Organisation

ETISC is registered as an incorporated body under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines pertaining to non-profit associations. Registered address is at IID in Davao City, Philippines.

Membership is open in accordance with the criteria laid down in its by-laws. Members elect a 5 person Board as the highest policy making organ of the association for a two year term.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr José Ramos-Horta has agreed to serve as Chairman of the interim Board. The Board will meet at least once per year. A number of prominent international defenders of the norms, principles and rights violated by the East Timor situation are being invited to become ETISC patrons so as to assist ETISC and enhance its standing. The management of ETSIC will be the responsibility of an Executive Director, ex-officio member of the Board and answerable to it. The functions of the executive office are initially being shared between Darwin and Davao. A number of other facilities will be set up in a variety of countries in the world according to identified needs. Suitable personnel is being hired to run these ETSIC facilities.

Budget

ETSIC has received funding commitments from government, church and private donors internationally, towards the annual operational budget needed to implement its envisaged work program. Further donations are still being sought.

Planned activities

The East Timor International Support Center will be active in the following fields, operating from a variety of locations in the world:

- media relations
- information material production
- international education campaigns
- organisation of visits to and from East Timor
- organisation of conference, symposia and other gatherings
- organisation of international action campaigns
- international support group coordination and assistance
- coordination of scientific research on East Timor
- human resource development programs
- support for East Timorese organisations' activities